

Rolling Back The Clock
By Stephen Michael Kellat, Erie Looking Productions
1 December 2009

As a podcast presenter, I do listen to other programs out there. While the astute observer would note that *LISTen: An LISNews.org Podcast* leans right, my own listening does not lean always that way. One program originating from public service television TVO in the Canadian province of Ontario is called *Search Engine*.

This program is unique as it started out as a radio program with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, became a podcast hosted by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and now is a podcast hosted by TVO. In many respects *Search Engine* is a program fairly similar to *LISTen* but originates from Canada and lacks the focus on library and information science applied issues *LISTen* has. The program's most recent episode is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share-Alike 2.5 Canada license which would make it appropriate to be burnt to audio compact disc for distribution to library patrons as previously discussed on *LISTen* in a sort of variation on slot radio.*

It being Tuesday, *Search Engine* host Jesse Brown released another episode.* This episode discussed the recent remarks by media mogul Rupert Murdoch. Although Murdoch was incorrectly identified as a citizen of Australia, this has not been the case for decades. Murdoch was bound by law to hold United States citizenship alone if he wanted to own television stations there. The Adelaide native recently presented what seemed like startling ideas. Murdoch is against cost-free content online and wants to challenge the validity of the fair use doctrine in court. Murdoch also indicated he felt that his lawyers would persevere.

Throughout the course of the episode, Brown puzzled through the matter with a guest as to what it might mean for the Internet. To a student of librarianship, this is not as troubling as it might have seemed to Brown and his guest. Indeed, Rupert Murdoch was not proposing anything new for the knowledge ecology. What Murdoch instead proposed was essentially the turning back of the clock to a time when search engines like Google and Yahoo did not exist and you had to search first with Lexis-Nexis and/or the venerable DIALOG where your access times were metered and next to nothing was free in the databases there.

Lexis-Nexis is not gone as a search tool for news stories let alone legal information. DIALOG still exists and still has quite active databases like World News Connection, produced by the CIA's Open Source Center that derives intelligence from openly published rather than covert sources, that are the public releases of data that already inform leaders like President Obama. The paradigm that Murdoch seeks is to impose the ways of DIALOG and Lexis-Nexis on the rest of the Internet. Even there, this more harkens back to the early days of information services like Prodigy and America Online/AOL than to today's Internet.

What does this mean for the future of the knowledge ecology? Unfortunately it means little until actual action is taken. Until then the order of the day is speculation.

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